

## GEORGE C. MARSHALL AWARDS CONFERENCE

*Cadet Command  
converges  
on VMI*



*Story and Photos by Bob Rosenburgh*

See Page 2 for more ...





## Best cadets honored at Marshall Seminar

LEXINGTON, Va. – More than 275 cadets from ROTC programs around the nation have settled in at Virginia Military Institute and Washington and Lee University here recently to be honored at the annual George C. Marshall Awards Seminar. The seminar salutes those cadets chosen as the very best by each of their schools because they have achieved honors across the board as scholars, athletes and leaders.

This year, the seminar ran from April 10 through 13 and was attended by Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter Schoomaker; Lt. Gen. Robert Van Antwerp, who commands Army Accessions Command; and Training and Doctrine Command Commander, Gen. William Wallace.

“I want to commend you all,” Schoomaker said in his remarks, “for being selected for the Marshall Award by each of your schools. This is, without question, the highest honor you can be given as an Army ROTC cadet.” Among the other keynote speakers were Brig. Gen. James Chambers, Director of the Center for Logistics Readiness, Chief of Chaplains Maj. Gen. David Hicks, Brig. Gen. Susan Lawrence, Director of J-6 Central Command, Command Sgt. Maj. Michelle Jones, CSM of the Army Reserve, and a veritable “Who’s Who” of movers and shakers throughout the Armed Forces and military advocacy organizations.

As one benefit of being selected for the seminar, the cadets attend a variety of presentations on current events, national security, military technology and a wide range of other cutting-edge topics by the very senior leaders shaping the course of those issues. Every cadet had the opportunity to pose questions and engage the speakers during a series of round table discussions and following speeches by the senior leaders. The

sessions gave these future leaders invaluable insights into many important things they will soon take an active part in upon commissioning.

“The sessions we went to were very beneficial,” said Cadet Christopher Griffenkrantz of Temple University in Philadelphia, Penn., “The round table leaders are subject-matter experts and had a lot of information about things I never knew and might not have learned otherwise.”

As is custom at the conference, the VMI corps of cadets performed on the parade field with a series of stirring martial displays. The parade consisted of rifle drills and marching bands, including stirring bagpipe renditions leading off the drum and bugle corps. The event drew praise and applause from VIPs, leaders, Marshall cadets and guests alike.

Held on the spacious VMI Parade Field and surrounded by impressive examples of historic statuary and artillery, the VMI cadets stepped smartly and executed a series of tricky drill maneuvers that included “Fixing of the Bayonets,” a traditional symbol of the Battle of Market Garden. In that Civil War engagement, VMI cadets were called into action and won the day against seasoned Union troops, the only time in American history cadets fought in actual combat as a unit. The parade concluded with the several thousand cadets passing in review before VMI Commandant, retired Gen. J. H. Binford Peay, and assembled dignitaries.

On the final day of the seminar, Region group sessions allowed senior leaders to address the cadets and speak with them. While Col. Robert Frusha, Eastern Region commander addressed the more than 140 Marshall cadets from his command, Command Sgt. Maj. Mercado addressed the group from Western Region on behalf of their commander, Col. Steven Corbett, who could not attend.

“Overall I learned a lot about our future leaders and most importantly about their senior programs,” said Mercado. “I personally talked to every cadet in our region and I got sincere feed back about LDAC and their programs. If I was going to rate this event, I would give it an A+.”



Western Region cadets assemble for a group photo with Cadet Command's Cmd. Sgt. Maj. Major Washington and Commander Maj. Gen. H. Montague Winfield, both flanking a cadet in the center.





**1.** A company of VMI cadets pass in review. The cadets will shortly fix bayonets on their M-14 rifles, a traditional honor memorializing the VMI cadets who won a battle during the Civil War and the only ones in history to do so.

**2.** A number of Marshall cadets wore uniforms unique to their own university, such as Cadet Gabor Vecsey, a foreign exchange cadet from Hungary.

**3.** Cadet Robin Buster of Western Illinois University poses with Gen. Peter Schoomaker, Chief of Staff of the Army, for a photograph.





4

**4.** A VMI cadet posts himself across the parade field from his formation, marking the spot they will guide on as they advance.

**5.** Western Region Command Sgt. Maj. Victor Mercado conducts an NCO round table meeting on the role of Platoon Leaders and NCOs, assisted by Sgt. 1st Class Tony Gilbert from Fort Knox, Ky., and 1st Lt. Christina Payne from Fort Sill, Okla.



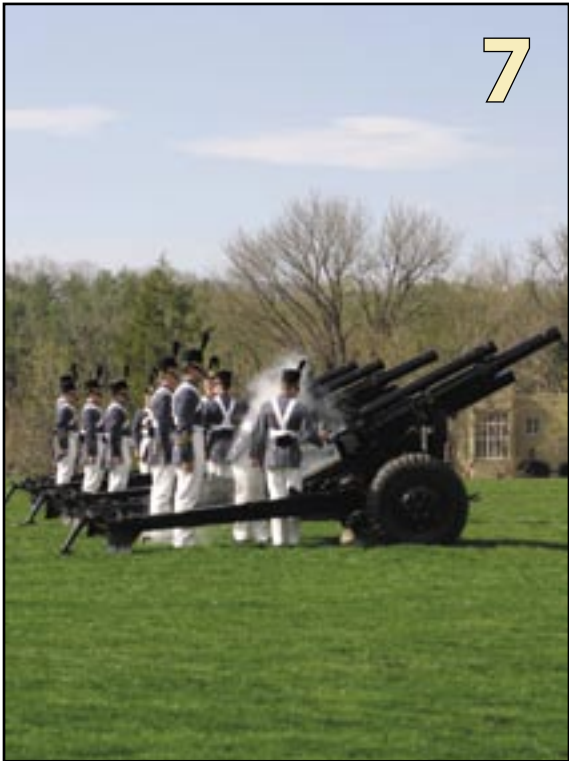
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**6.** A group of Marshall cadets moves to their next round table session. Included in the group of more than 270 cadets from U.S. Army Cadet Command were guest cadets from foreign universities, the Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and West Point.



6





**7.** VMI cannon crews extract a spent salute round from the breech of their howitzer.

**8.** The VMI cadet bagpipers play their Tattoo as they pass the gathered Marshall cadets and guests.



**Col. Steven R. Corbett**  
*Commander*  
*Western Region, U.S Army Cadet Command*

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